



**MARICOPA COUNTY**  
**Environmental Services**  
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## **Mosquito Pool in Maricopa County Positive for Western Equine Encephalitis**

**PHOENIX (June 20, 2003)** - Maricopa County Environmental Services Vector Control reported today that a mosquito pool collected at 83<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and the River Bottom tested positive for Western Equine Encephalitis (WEE). The virus that causes WEE is not the same as or even a close relative of the West Nile Virus (WNV).

“We have been seeing WEE in Maricopa County for at least the last 5 years,” said John Townsend, Maricopa County Vector Control Manager. “Unfortunately, arbo-viruses such as WEE can affect both humans and horses,” said Townsend. “Knowing this, residents need to take precautions against the mosquitoes that become infected with these viruses.”

These precautions include eliminating any standing water where mosquitoes tend to breed such as decorative fountains, bottles, buckets, old tires, drums and other containers. Also, changing water in flower vases, birdbaths, planters and animal watering dishes at least twice a week.

When outside at night, residents can reduce getting bit by mosquitoes by using insect repellent with DEET and by wearing lightweight clothing that covers arms and legs.

Townsend added that normally mosquitoes won't travel far from their breeding site, therefore it is important that residents not only eliminate breeding sites in their own yards, but work with neighbors to make sure everyone is doing their part.

This year, in anticipation of West Nile Virus, Maricopa County has increased its surveillance program and has been routinely testing sentinel chickens, mosquitoes and dead birds for WEE, WNV and St. Louis Encephalitis.

Residents are encouraged to call the Environmental Citizens Complaint Line at 602-505-6616 or log on to [maricopa.gov/envsvc](http://maricopa.gov/envsvc) to report a dead bird or register a mosquito complaint.

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